



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CONSUMER AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Members of the Board

Gloria Molina
Mark Ridley-Thomas
Zev Yaroslavsky
Don Knabe
Michael D. Antonovich

Commission
Linda Smith-Gaston, Ed.D.
Chair

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

April 6, 2009

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, 1st District
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, 2nd District
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, 3rd District
Supervisor Don Knabe, 4th District
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, 5th District

From: Linda Smith-Gaston, Ed.D, Chairperson *L. Smith-Gaston, Ed.D.*
Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission

**Subject: Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission
Annual Report - 2008**

As required by County Ordinance, I am pleased to submit the following annual report of the activities and accomplishments of the Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission for calendar year 2008.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Commission (Commission) was established in 1980, and has continued pursuant to Board order under Chapter 3.13 of the Los Angeles County Code. The Commission is a non-regulatory body whose purpose is to represent the interests of consumers to the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and the Board of Supervisors. The Commission meets monthly, except for the months of July, August and December. Commissioners serve without compensation.

ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Commission proved a valuable resource for the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs and represented county residents on matters of concern to consumers. Commission meetings provided a forum to discuss emerging and ongoing consumer issues. During calendar year 2008, the Commission's activities and accomplishments included the following:

- Assisted the department by bringing the Commission's collective experience as consumers, as members of the business community and as leaders in their own communities to bear on matters of concern to the department and county consumers.

- Distributed information about the foreclosure process and DCA real estate services to members of their communities. The Commission also assisted with translating the material into an additional language (Korean).
- Assisted the department by reviewing translated material to ensure the translation was accurate, clear, and understandable for the intended audience.
- Completed mandatory sexual harassment prevention and cultural awareness training for commissioners.
- Developed a webpage about the Commission on the Department of Consumer Affairs website at <http://dca.lacounty.gov/Commission.htm>.
- Implemented a pilot program to email meeting announcements and materials to Commissioners.
- Planned a Commission Strategic Planning Retreat to be held in February 2009.
- Attended the 2008 California Consumer Summit as representatives of the Commission to learn about current consumer trends and network with other consumer affairs professionals.

RESOURCES

To become a better resource for the community, Commissioners invited and heard presentations by department staff and an outside representative on a variety of topics important to consumers. Experts in their respective fields were an invaluable resource to the Commission as it carried out its responsibilities during the past year. In their role as speakers, these presenters provided both oral and written information and remained available to Commissioners for any follow-up. Speakers included:

- Rigo Reyes, Chief Investigator, Department of Consumer Affairs
Topic: New Consumer Laws in 2008 and DCA Special Investigations
- Sherry Samani, Investigator, Department of Consumer Affairs
Topic: Elder Financial Abuse Prevention Services at DCA
- Maritza Gutierrez, Supervising Investigator, Department of Consumer Affairs
Topic: Foreclosure Crisis
- Dr. Marissa Pei, Strategic Planning Facilitator
Topic: Preparations for Commission Retreat
- Kirk Shelton, Consumer Affairs Specialist, Department of Consumer Affairs
Topic: Smarter Seniors in Public Housing program at DCA

ELECTION OF CHAIR and VICE-CHAIRPERSONS

In 2008, Linda Smith-Gaston, Ed.D. was elected Chairperson of the Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission and Ho-Jeong Eun was elected Vice-Chair.

Linda Smith-Gaston, Ed.D. was re-elected Chair for calendar year 2009.

The members of the Commission wish to express their appreciation to the Board of Supervisors for providing them the opportunity to serve Los Angeles County and its residents. We look forward with enthusiasm to the coming year, and to continuing what has been a successful and productive relationship with the Department of Consumer Affairs.